

What is a Citizen?

TITLE OF LESSON: What is a Citizen: A Team Civitas* Declaration

TIME FRAME: One 80 minute block or two 45-minute periods.

OVERVIEW:

In this lesson students compare the rights and responsibilities of their school teammates to those outlined in the Declaration of Independence. This is a meaningful way to explain your expectations for the year to students.

*Explanation of the term, "Team Civitas"

The term "civitas" is Latin meaning citizenship, a community of citizens. According to Webster's Unabridged Dictionary (<http://www.m-w.com/mw/netdict.htm>) the word civitas is one of the root words of the English word, city. Civitas is Latin for community or a collection of a population. Team Civitas is a team name for a group of citizens. You may choose to use Team Civitas to name your team, or create a unique team name of your own.

OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- 1** Identify the six expectations for Team Civitas.
- 2** Analyze the Declaration of Independence.
- 3** Use the six expectations of Team Civitas as a "Declaration" for students and staff.

MATERIALS / EQUIPMENT:

Overhead or LCD projector
Overheads of the Handouts
Handouts including:
[Declaration of Independence Activity](#)
[Team Civitas Overview Document](#)
[Expectations Team Civitas Activity](#)
[Closure Assignment Sheet](#)

LESSON QUESTION: What is a citizen?

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

- 1** Have the Preamble of Declaration of Independence displayed on an overhead.
Students follow along as the teacher reads the preamble aloud:

"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness..."

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2 Distribute the **Declaration of Independence Activity Sheet**.

Have the students complete the questions on the handout:

- * Where is this from?
- * Are these words important? Why?
- * How do they make you feel?
- * Does America live up to these ideals? If so how?
- * Do you wish everyone believed and acted on these words? Why?

3 Partner sharing: Have each student partner with another student and share their answers together, then report back to the entire class. Please make certain EACH group gets an opportunity to share. It is important to create a culture in the classroom that expects students to participate with their voice and opinions.

4 Team Civitas Overview. Distribute the **Team Civitas Overview**. Go over the pillars and expectations associated with being a member of Team Civitas. After explaining each expectation have students complete the **Expectations Team Civitas Activity sheet**

Ask the group:

- * Why should these expectations be important to you?
- * What can you do to ensure you will meet these expectations?

5 Share with a partner: Next have the students share their responses to each question with a partner then have each partner group pair with another.

6 Class Discussion. Have the students generate/brainstorms ways that the Declaration of Independence is similar to Team Civitas Expectations. Write the responses on the board and discuss each as a class.

7 Distribute the **Paragraph and Closure** handout. The students write a paragraph connecting and comparing the **Declaration of Independence Preamble** with the Team Civitas expectations. The paragraph should discuss the importance of having expectations and how this concept is linked to the Declaration of Independence.

8 As a final reflection activity, students complete the following sentence:
"To be a good citizen I could...." which is found at the bottom of the sheet.

ASSESSMENT:

- 1** Declaration of Independence Activity
- 2** Expectations Team Civitas Activity
- 3** Paragraph – Connection between Declaration of Independence and Team Civitas Expectations.
- 4** Closure statement sentence



LESSON 1

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STANDARDS:

This lesson correlates to the national McRel Standards for Civics located online at www.mcrel.org

- 1-4** Understands major ideas about why government is necessary
Understands competing ideas about the purposes government should serve
- 4-6** Knows how constitutions have been used to protect individual rights and promote the common good
- 9-1a** Identifies fundamental values and principles that are expressed in basic documents such as the Declaration of Independence
- 9-2** Understands how certain values (e.g. individual rights, the common good...openness, free inquiry, truth, patriotism) are fundamental to American public life